

# KUDOS

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## CITIZEN HEROS

by Mike Weger, fire captain specialist, Tulare Unit

On October 8, 2002, the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and CDF Tulare Unit Chief/Tulare County Fire Chief David Hillman presented two plaques commemorating the heroic efforts of two county residents in two separate incidents.

### **Henry Balangue**

At approximately 4 p.m. on August 4, 2002, fire equipment (CDF/TCFD) units were dispatched to a reported travel trailer fire at Road 223 and Avenue 152 near the city of Porterville.

Upon arrival of the first in fire engine they found a travel trailer fully involved in fire and one home threatened by flames. Fire personnel also found the occupant of the trailer laying outside the trailer needing medical help for severe burn injuries.

CDF personnel at scene later discovered that Porterville resident Henry Balangue had driven by the trailer and saw smoke coming from the front of the trailer. He stopped and knocked on the door to see if someone was inside the trailer. While he initially could not see anyone he did hear the victim's moans.

Mr. Balangue said that the visibility inside the trailer was very limited due the smoke holding only 18 inches off the floor. He was also hindered in his rescue attempt because the victim's leg was caught on something. Mr. Balangue had to exit the trailer without the victim to get fresh air. He then re-entered the trailer and managed to free the victim and pull him outside the trailer. Unfortunately, the burn victim died the next day from his injuries.

Balangue's heroic efforts have also been submitted for consideration to the Carnegie Hero Foundation.

### **John Battle**

At approximately 11:04 a.m. on August 23, 2002, fire equipment (CDF/TCFD) units were dispatched to a reported traffic accident with fire at the intersection of Lovers Lane and Cartmill Avenue north east of the city of Tulare.

Prior to the arrival of fire equipment, Exeter resident John Battle happened upon the scene while performing his truck driving duties for USA Waste Services in Goshen. Mr. Battle used his own dry chemical fire extinguisher to control the fire in the passenger vehicle's engine compartment. The first arriving fire unit found a major injury traffic accident in which a passenger car containing 3 women were trapped and entangled in the wreckage. The car had struck the side of a semi-truck and trailer combination. The car came to rest underneath one of the truck's trailers. This circumstance presented fire personnel with a very difficult extrication problem. Had it not been for Mr. Battle's life

saving effort, all three victims may have perished from the flames, given the extended time taken to extricate the victims.

The combined efforts of everyone involved in both these tragic events resulted in the victims being transported to definitive care facilities within the "Trauma Golden Hour."

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## **John Tennant**

John Tennant was honored by the Assembly in a declaration February 6, 2002 for his years of dedication to fire prevention and suppression service.

Whereas, The people of California have a special affinity for, and are greatly indebted to, the men and women who have served in various branches of fire prevention and suppression service in order to protect and defend our precious freedom; and

Whereas, In acknowledgement of the volunteer spirit and devotion to duty and country exhibited by John J. Tennant, California State Fire Marshal, before and after September 11, 2001, he is deserving of the highest honors and commendations from the people of California; and

Whereas, Mr. Tennant, a career professional firefighter, has spent his life working in public service in the pursuit of equity as well as public safety, and he is renowned for his experience and training; and

Whereas, California Fire Marshal John J. Tennant has demonstrated dedication and a positive spirit, and his efforts serve as an inspiration for all those who aspire to excellence in the defense of their country through fire prevention and suppression service; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by Speaker of the Assembly Herb Wesson, That, on this special day, February 6, 2002, he wishes to thank and express his pride and appreciation to California Fire Marshal John J. Tennant for the professionalism, dedication, and commitment he has displayed on behalf of the United States of America.

# **PRAISE FOR THE CDF ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT**

## **CDF's Archaeology Training Department**

Kristie Bundgrad, supervisor for the City of Roseville Parks & Recreation, Maidu Interpretive Center, recently commended CDF archaeologists for an excellent three-day training course, with special thanks to Linda and Garret. Bundgrad stated, "The training was high quality, content rich, professionally presented and incredibly helpful to all of us..." "The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has built a top quality, highly competent and dedicated team that many other agencies look to as a model for leadership and staff training. Please extend my thanks to your exceptional team of archaeologists and their able supervisor, Dan Foster, who pioneered and developed this training for many years.

## **The Importance of Archaeology**

When Essays in California Archaeology: A Memorial to Franklin Fenega was published it included an important contribution from CDF's Senior State Archeologist Dan Foster, and his brother, John, who is also a senior archaeologist with the Department of Parks and Recreation. The article written by Dan and John describes one of the most significant archaeological discoveries made by CDF and emphasizes the importance of public agency archaeology programs. It was now retired CDF Forester Dave Drennan who discovered a major village site containing two petroglyph panels during his inspection of a timber harvesting project along the Eel River Canyon in 1993. The site was first reported in 1913 by a U.S. government engineer working on the Northwestern Pacific railroad, but its exact location was unknown until Drennan's fantastic discovery. Drennan was able to relocate the site due to archaeology training that the CDF program has been providing to foresters, firefighters, and other resource professionals for years. "It was one of the greatest archaeological discoveries made by CDF in the past decade," said Foster. He added that he and his brother were honored to contribute to this memorial publication, and in fact CDF assisted with article review, layout and production. Archaeology Professor Franklin Fenega passed away in 1994. Gerrit Fenega, Franklin Fenega's son, has been an archaeologist with CDF in Sacramento Headquarters for the past two years.

You can find an excerpt from Dan and John's essay at:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~e472/cdf/rockart/eelhome.html>

If you would like to purchase a copy of Essays in California Archaeology: A Memorial to Franklin Fenega contact: University of California Publications, (510) 643-3538 or via e-mail at [tsmith@sscl.berkeley.edu](mailto:tsmith@sscl.berkeley.edu).

## **PINES FIRE THANK YOUS**

**Graham and Carol Gerald** sent Director Tuttle a letter of gratitude to CDF for saving their house during the Pines Fire. “The intensity of this inferno was beyond comparison”. Along with tinder dry conditions and the gusting wind, it is a miracle that any house was saved. Beginning with the announcement for evacuation on August 3, 2002, until were able to phone CDF on August 7 and find out our house was still there; we were totally helpless and put our trust in the firefighters. We are now big fans of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and feel that this fire was the largest test any firefighter could face.

Just a note - The fact that the Gerald’s had great clearance around their property made it easier for firefighters to do their job.

**Michael Pinto, Ph.D.**, property owner in the Pines Fire area, sent a letter to San Diego Unit Chief Ken Miller with the following praise: “ I wanted to pen this letter of appreciation to the CDF firemen that helped save my house, with special thanks to Division Chief Bill Clayton. They acted courageously while at the same time showing great respect and appreciation for the land and its resources. On their behalf as well as for the many others that have fought this devastating fire, and at the recommendation of many firemen, I will be making a donation to the San Diego Burn Treatment Center.”

**Assistant Fire Chief Bill Metcalf, North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District** sent a letter to CDF Director Tuttle following a very positive experience with a CDF employee. “During early August I had the opportunity to be assigned to the Pines Fire in eastern San Diego County as a Division/Group Supervisor trainee. I was specifically assigned to CDF Fire Caption Scott Lindgren. This is a time when many people would not have been too excited about taking responsibility for a trainee, however, that was not the case at all with Scott. He made me feel welcome, provided an incredible learning experience, and was a pleasure to work with throughout the entire assignment.”

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## **CROY FIRE**

The citizens of Morgan Hill sent heartfelt thanks via their Mayor and City Council members to CDF for the successful control and clean-up of the Croy Fire. “We were most impressed by the integration and cooperation of the many individuals and agencies participating in containing the fire. Some members had the opportunity to fly over the fire, visit the command center and speak with various fire fighters and personnel from many different agencies.

## **INTERFACE FIRE**

Fire Chief Keith Richter of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District forwarded to Northern Region Chief Dave Driscoll appreciation for the assistance they received from CDF on an interface fire near Pacheco Boulevard this past summer. The early arrival of CDF resources made a big impact on their ability to successfully manage the fire. Special thanks went to Battalion Chiefs John Elliff, Mike Martin and Tom Glunt.

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## **MOUNTAIN INCIDENT**

Fire Chief Christopher Gray, of the city of Glendale thanked CDF via a letter to Director Tuttle for their help with the Mountain Incident in September. The brush fire, in extremely difficult terrain, had extreme potential, but the coordinated efforts of fire, police and support agencies stopped the fire at 800 acres. Chief Gray stated that considering the urban environment and hundreds of homes surrounding the incident, “we were extremely fortunate that there was no property loss and injuries were limited and minor.”

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## **JEEP JAMBOREE**

The staff of Jeep Jamboree, USA, extended thanks to Forestry Assistant II Matt Gilbert, of the Jackson Demonstration State Forest for the success of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Lost Coast Jeep Jamboree held last July. Matt not only assisted in finding trails for the outing, he took the time to offer a Powerpoint presentation on the diverse elements that are contained in forest management practices. The staff felt that Matt went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that the Lost Coast Jeep Jamboree participants walked away with a new appreciation of our forestland.

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## **RELAY FOR LIFE**

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors wrote to commend CDF employees who prepared thousands of meals for the 2002 Relay for Life fundraiser for cancer research, which raised \$700,000 at this event. Countless hours of hard work contributed greatly to

the success of this event and special thanks to Humboldt –Del Norte Unit Chief Dick Goings and staff for all their assistance, their efforts were greatly appreciated.

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## **INTERMOUNTAIN CREWS**

The Chief Executive Officer of the Mayers Memorial Hospital, conservation camp, thanks Lassen-Modoc Unit Chief Steve Peterson, and the Intermountain crews for the time and effort they gave to their hospital cleanup project.

Mayers Memorial Hospital is a small rural hospital who struggles to find resources to help keep their grounds neat and orderly and at the same time present a positive impact not only for their patients, residents, and staff, but their entire community. Chief Executive Officer Jerald M. Fikes said “this is a great program and was a very positive experience for the hospital staff and facility.”

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## **FIRE INSPECTION**

The Deputy Director for the Board of Corrections, complimented Deputy State Fire Marshal III specialist, Ellie Shelton for her diligence in fire inspections in local adult and juvenile detention facilities. He commended our Department on the priority being given to completing these inspections. He stated that this is the best level of compliance with statutory requirements for fire inspections that they can recall.

## **FROM THE DIRECTOR**

The Director sent a letter of appreciation to Fire Captain Mark Johnson of the Tulare Unit, for establishing a bank account for the FDNY Widows and Orphans Fund. Captain Johnson’s support of this charity and hard work in soliciting donations, raised over \$15,000 for that fund. He then traveled to New York with fellow firefighters and presented the check personally to the FDNY Widows and Orphans Fund. The presentation was shown on ABC’s Good Morning America and watched by hundreds of CDF firefighters. The Director stated that Captain Johnson’s compassionate response to the events of September 11, reflects the unselfish and professional attributes that we should all set as our standard and we thank him for representing our department in the finest tradition.